

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States
Military Forces for Implementation of the Balkan Peace Process
December 21, 1995**

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

I last reported to the Congress on December 6, 1995, concerning U.S. support for the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia. In that report I noted the success of our diplomatic efforts at Dayton, Ohio, to assist the parties to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and reported the deployment of a NATO "enabling force" and U.S. support forces in order to lay the groundwork for the deployment of the main body of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR). I am now able to report that on December 14, 1995, the peace agreement that was initiated in Dayton was formally signed in Paris.

Following the formal signing of the peace agreement by all the parties, and consistent with our consultations with the Congress, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1031, and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decision of December 16, 1995, I have ordered the deployment of approximately 20,000 U.S. military personnel to participate in the IFOR in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, principally in a sector surrounding Tuzla. Approximately 5,000 U.S. military personnel will also deploy as part of the IFOR in other states of the former Yugoslavia, principally Croatia. The IFOR, including U.S. forces assigned to it, will be under NATO operational control and will operate under NATO rules of engagement. In addition, a total of approximately 7,000 U.S. support forces, under U.S. command and control and rules of engagement, will deploy in Hungary, Croatia, Italy, and other states in the region in support of IFOR. These force levels are those stated by U.S. commanders to be appropriate for the missions assigned to them.

The IFOR's mission, as outlined in more detail in the summary of the operation plan (OPLAN), which I sent to the Congress on December 11, 1995, is to monitor and help ensure compliance by all parties with the military aspects of the peace agreement. In particular, IFOR will ensure withdrawal of the forces of the parties to the agreed inter-entity borders

within an agreed period and enforce establishment of agreed zones of separation between forces of the parties. IFOR will also create secure conditions for the safe, orderly, and speedy withdrawal from the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina of those elements of the U.N. Protection Force not assigned to NATO. Finally, within the strict limits of its key military tasks, IFOR will endeavor to create secure conditions for the conduct by other agencies and organizations of tasks associated with the peace agreement. NATO and U.S. military commanders believe, and I expect, that the military mission can be accomplished in about a year.

Many of the U.S. forces that will deploy to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be drawn from the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division stationed in Germany, including two mechanized brigades and an aviation brigade. Other participating U.S. forces include special operations forces, airfield operations support forces, naval and air forces previously assigned to support NATO's Operations Sharp Guard and Deny Flight, and an amphibious force in reserve in the Mediterranean Sea. Additionally, a carrier battle group will provide support for IFOR's air operations.

All of our NATO allies are contributing forces as well (except for Iceland, which has no military). Non-NATO nations whose offers to provide forces to IFOR are under consideration include Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, and Ukraine. These forces also will be under NATO operational control and rules of engagement. In total, approximately 60,000 military personnel are expected to be deployed by IFOR to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As in the U.S. case, the non-U.S. contingents in Bosnia will in most cases be supported by forces of their respective countries at home and in nearby countries and waters.

I authorized these deployments and U.S. participation in IFOR in conjunction with our NATO allies and other troop contributing nations following the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions and NAC decisions and as part

of our commitment to secure the peace and halt the tragic loss of life in the former Yugoslavia. I have directed the participation of U.S. forces pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in the former Yugoslavia, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I remain committed to consulting closely with the Congress

and I will continue to keep the Congress fully informed regarding these important deployments of our forces.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 22.

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa December 6, 1995

Warm greetings to everyone who is observing the festival of Kwanzaa.

Across America and around the globe, Kwanzaa is a vibrant celebration of African culture, encouraging us to gain a deeper appreciation of our families and the many blessings we enjoy. Kwanzaa's seven basic principles—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—stir our imagination, stimulate thought and reflection, and bring new purpose to our daily lives.

Transcending international boundaries and embracing the rich cultural traditions of Africa,

this joyous festival links diverse individuals in a unique celebration of a dynamic heritage. Renewing hope and restoring faith, Kwanzaa uplifts the human spirit, helping us to revitalize the bonds of family and the spirit of community.

As millions of my fellow Americans commemorate Kwanzaa, I am delighted to send best wishes for a wonderful festival and a very happy new year.

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 22.

Exchange With Reporters on Bosnia in Arlington, Virginia December 22, 1995

The President. Good morning.

Q. Mr. President, do you hope to go to Bosnia in the next month or so?

The President. I want to go when the Secretary of Defense and General Shalikashvili tell me it's an appropriate thing to do. I don't want to interrupt the deployment in any way. You know, we've had a few weather delays, but I'm here to get a briefing on the deployment and what's going on and how we're doing. I've got a few questions I want to ask. If it were solely up to me, I would go tomorrow, literally tomorrow. But I think it's very important that I not

do anything which interrupts the deployment. I can go as soon as it's consistent with the military mission, and I will do that.

Q. What have you heard so far, even before this briefing, on how the operation is going in Bosnia?

The President. I think our people are doing a very good job. I think the others in IFOR are doing a good job, and I think the people there, so far, are receiving them well. But I've got some specific questions, and that's why I want this briefing.